

"(i) IN GENERAL.—An employer shall be treated as meeting the requirements of subparagraph (A)(iii) for any year if, in lieu of the contributions described in such clause, the employer elects to make nonelective contributions of 2 percent of compensation for each employee who is eligible to participate in the arrangement and who has at least \$5,000 of compensation from the employer for the year. If an employer makes an election under this subparagraph for any year, the employer shall notify employees of such election within a reasonable period of time before the 60-day period for such year under paragraph (5XC).

"(ii) COMPENSATION LIMITATION.—The compensation taken into account under clause (i) for any year shall not exceed the limitation in effect for such year under section 401(a)(17).

"(C) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this subsection—

"(i) ELIGIBLE EMPLOYER.—

"(I) IN GENERAL.—The term 'eligible employer' means, with respect to any year, an employer which had no more than 100 employees who received at least \$5,000 of compensation from the employer for the preceding year.

"(II) 2-YEAR GRACE PERIOD.—An eligible employer who establishes and maintains a plan under this subsection for 1 or more years and who fails to be an eligible employer for any subsequent year shall be treated as an eligible employer for the 2 years following the last year the employer was an eligible employer. If such failure is due to any acquisition, disposition, or similar transaction involving an eligible employer, the preceding sentence shall apply only in accordance with the rules similar to the rules of section 410(b)(6XC)(i).

"(ii) APPLICABLE PERCENTAGE.—

"(I) IN GENERAL.—The term 'applicable percentage' means 3 percent.

"(II) ELECTION OF LOWER PERCENTAGE.—An

employer may elect to apply a lower percentage (not less than 1 percent) for any year for all employees eligible to participate in the plan for such year if the employer notifies the employees of such lower percentage within a reasonable period of time before the 60-day election period for such year under paragraph (5)(C). An employer may not elect a lower percentage under this subclause for any year if that election would result in the applicable percentage being lower than 3 percent in more than 2 of the years in the 5-year period ending with such year.

"(III) SPECIAL RULE FOR YEARS ARRANGEMENT NOT IN EFFECT.—If any year in the 5-year period described in subclause (II) is a year prior to the first year for which any qualified salary reduction arrangement is in effect with respect to the employer (or any predecessor), the employer shall be treated as if the level of the employer matching